



Northern Great Plains Network

Inventory and Monitoring Monthly Report

October 2003



Field Inventories: The field inventories are concluded for 2003 except for some of the automated camera units which are still out at Devils Tower NM and Mount Rushmore NM. Progress reports are due from the investigators by the end of December.

NPSpecies: Marcia Wilson has been working very hard in cleaning up the database, which I can assure you, is no easy task. Hopefully we'll be in a position this winter where we can start having the inventory investigators and others "certify" the data. Remember, Marcia is the Network Point-of-Contact for NPSpecies.

Data Manager Position: The announcement has closed for the position. I've heard that we have 6-7 status candidates, but I haven't seen a cert yet. I haven't heard anything on the non-status applicants. If anyone wants to review the applications and/or participate in interviews let me know.

Development of the Vital Signs Plan: On October 23, I, along with Brenda Moraska LaFrancois (MWR Aquatic Ecologist), met with Dr. Nels Troelstrup of South Dakota State University to go over the details of our agreement with him to develop the aquatic portion of our Vital Signs monitoring plan. I'm really happy with the choice of Dr. Troelstrup as the investigator for this project and I expect an excellent product. His team consists of:

Nels H. Troelstrup, Jr., Ph.D. – Investigator
Ms. Jill Jensen - M.S. student
Ms. Jessica Meisenhoelder - lab/field technician (undergraduate)
Mr. Mike Walerak - GIS/Data technician (undergraduate)

I sent Dr. Troelstrup everything I have in regards to aquatic resources in Network parks. This includes GIS layers from the NPS clearinghouse, the "Horizon" water quality reports prepared by the Water Resources Division, data and reports from NPSpecies and NatureBib, and other information. If you have information not in any national databases that you feel may be of use to him please contact me. Sometime next spring or summer Dr. Troelstrup and his team will be visiting your park and that would also be a good time to coordinate information.

I coordinated with David Pohlman (MWR Air Quality Specialist) and Tonnie Maniero (Air Quality Specialist/Biologist Northeast Region) in regards to air quality monitoring. They will compile the necessary background data on air quality monitoring in and around Network parks and develop some monitoring recommendations for us.

The park-specific scoping workshops for Vital Signs monitoring are progressing nicely. Dr. Amy Symstad, Dr. Marcia Wilson, and/or myself have now met with all parks except

Knife River Indian Villages NHS, Fort Union Trading Post NHS, Wind Cave NP, and Mount Rushmore NMEM. The remaining parks are all scheduled for November except for Mount Rushmore where we're still trying to nail down a date. Also, although Dr. Symstad met with natural resource staff at Theodore Roosevelt NP a few months back, it was primarily in regards to plant resources, therefore I would still like to have a workshop with all park staff, probably some time next spring.

Last, Dr. Symstad and I met with Cody Wienk of the Fire Effects Program and Chad Prosser of the Exotic Plant Management Team to discuss vegetation monitoring. It's critical that these 3 programs closely coordinate their activities, indeed, the more integration the better. I've talked to the WASO I&M Coordinator and he encourages as much integration as possible, both at the science and the administrative level. Cody, Chad, and I will continue exploring options and likely propose some (bold?) ideas at this winter's annual meeting.

Annual NEKOTA/I&M/Fire Meeting: Speaking of this winter's meeting, it is starting to take shape. It looks like the week of January 12th will be the week of the annual Northern Great Plains rendezvous, with I&M having the date of the 15th. However, I'm thinking of a slightly different approach this year with a half a day for the Technical Committee then a half a day for all interested park folks. Stay tuned.

Network Technical Committee: I will try and schedule a conference call for the Technical Committee sometime in mid-November. We have several things to discuss, the most important of which is the FY04 budget and potential projects.

Service Comprehensive Call: As you all know, the time is quickly approaching for submitting SCC proposals (aka, PMIS). I encourage you to contact Dr. Amy Symstad for any plant-related needs you might have. I'd be willing to try and assist on any other needs you might have (I've already tentatively agreed to working on a multi-park prairie dog proposal with Dr. Hugh Britten of the U. of South Dakota and a Network-wide biotic integrity study by Dr. Nels Troelstrup of South Dakota State U.).